

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

0259

USF Low-Income

February 24, 2011

The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up**  
**CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109**

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write today to commend the efforts of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service and Lifeline and Link Up. As we are sure you agree, we believe the Lifeline program provides an invaluable service to low-income constituents in our districts and across the country. We are glad the Board has decided to look for ways to minimize fraud, waste and abuse in the program so that deserving and qualified families will still have access to this important program.

In North Carolina, over 400,000 citizens across our state depend on Lifeline and as our nation struggles to overcome unemployment and other economic challenges, the Lifeline program is more invaluable than ever. Reports both academic and anecdotal have shown that access to phone service leads to greater chances of employment. Our districts' and our nation's residents should be able to access these services in the case of an emergency.

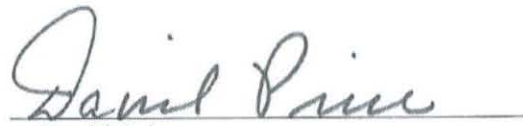
We agree wholeheartedly with the Board's recommendation that the Commission put together a plan for uniformity on areas that would apply to all Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) to help eliminate waste and abuse in this program. In doing so, however, we want to make sure that low-income support of the fund remains strong. Because this program is so beneficial to our districts' residents, our hope is it remains accessible and free to those who qualify.

Low-income support is cyclical and this should be acknowledged. As you may be aware, unemployment has remained above 9.5% for the last two years and those eligible for SNAP assistance has grown more rapidly in North Carolina than in the majority of other states. In these challenging economic times, programs such as Lifeline have a real and tangible impact on the lives of our constituents and we would like the Commission to recognize this, as we believe they do. As this recession begins to recede, the number of those eligible for Lifeline should also drop accordingly.

We urge the Commission to adopt the recommendations from the Federal-State Joint Board, as we would like to see these programs sustained in the short and long-term. Our only concern is that the Commission should not adopt policies that cap funding for low-income support or hinder competition in an already underserved market. For example, the FCC should not mandate (even minimal) monthly subscriber fees for Lifeline users, which would present an undue administrative burden on both carriers and consumers. The best approach to curtailing fraud and abuse is establishment of an eligibility database.

Thank you for your service to our constituents and this country. We look forward to seeing your proposed changes to strengthen these vital programs.

Very truly yours,

  
G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress  
David Price  
Member of Congress  
Melvin L. Watt  
Member of Congress  
Brad Miller  
Member of Congress  
Larry Kissell  
Member of Congress



# FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

April 26, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable George K. Butterfield  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2305 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for your letter commenting on the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service recommendations on reforming the universal service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts and your letter has been entered into the record of the proceeding.

I am pleased to report that on March 3, 2011, the Commission adopted a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* to reform and modernize the Lifeline/LinkUp program to make it more efficient and effective and to determine how best to meet our national broadband adoption goals. The *Notice* proposes immediate reforms to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse; improve accountability; and prevent over-burdening contributors to the Universal Service Fund. These proposals include the establishment of a National Accountability Database – administered by an independent third party – to ensure that multiple carriers are not receiving support to serve the same household and that only eligible households are participating in the program. The *Notice* also proposes a pilot program, funded with savings from the reforms, to determine how Lifeline/LinkUp can best be used to increase broadband adoption and use among low-income consumers.

I look forward to working with you to ensure access to telecommunications and broadband for all Americans. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JG", is written over the name Julius Genachowski.

Julius Genachowski





# FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

April 26, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Larry Kissell  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1632 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kissell:

Thank you for your letter commenting on the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service recommendations on reforming the universal service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts and your letter has been entered into the record of the proceeding.

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Julius Genachowski



# FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

April 26, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Brad Miller  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1127 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Miller:

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Julius Genachowski





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April 26, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable David E. Price  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2162 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Price:

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Sincerely,

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Julius Genachowski



# FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

April 26, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Melvin Watt  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2304 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Watt:

Thank you for your letter commenting on the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service recommendations on reforming the universal service Lifeline/LinkUp program. I appreciate your thoughts and your letter has been entered into the record of the proceeding.

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Julius Genachowski